

**For Immediate Release:** September 13, 2011

**Washington D.C.**--The House of Representatives today approved the Education and the Workforce Committee's first piece of education reform legislation. Introduced by Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Chairman Duncan Hunter, the Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act (H.R. 2218) passed with strong bipartisan support in a vote of 365 to 54.

"Approving the Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act is an important first step in our efforts to improve current elementary and secondary education law, and it signals our shared commitment to the reform process," said Chairman John Kline (R-MN). "I urge my colleagues in the Senate to take up this legislation quickly to provide more students access to the unique education opportunities offered by high-quality charter schools."

The Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act will facilitate the development and replication of high-performing charter schools in communities across the country, as well as encouraging choice, innovation, and excellence in education. This important legislation will also provide hope for students trapped in underperforming schools, including the estimated 420,000 students currently on charter school wait lists.

Rep. Hunter praised the legislation's passage. "For children stuck in subpar classrooms, a charter school can help these young Americans grow to enjoy learning and being challenged in the classroom, setting them on a stable path to future success and prosperity," he said. These schools have proven their value time and time again, and continue to make significant contributions to raising education outcomes in cities across the country. I'm grateful for the opportunity to have authored this legislation, and urge the Senate to do its part for the children who stand to benefit greatly from these innovative learning environments."

Specifically, the Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act will:

- Encourage states to support the development and expansion of charter schools;
- Streamline federal Charter School Program funding to reduce administrative burdens and improve funding opportunities for the replication of successful charter models and facilities assistance;
- Support an evaluation of schools' impact on students, families, and communities, while also encouraging sharing best practices between charters and traditional public schools; and
- Offer incentives to states that use charter schools to reach out to special populations, including at-risk students.

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce is advancing a series of legislation designed to reform elementary and secondary education law, currently known as No Child Left Behind. Over the summer, the committee approved the first three bills in this series: the Setting New Priorities in Education Spending Act (H.R. 1891), the Empowering Parents through Quality Charter Schools Act (H.R. 2218), and the State and Local Funding Flexibility Act (H.R. 2445).

The committee is in the process of developing legislation to address accountability and teacher quality issues, and expects the full package of education reform legislation to be considered this year.